



Testimony in Support of SB 1095, An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

Dear Chairs Currey and McCrory, Vice Chairs Winfield and Leeper, Ranking Members McCarty and Berthel, and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Yurii Stasiuk and I am a resident of New Haven. I'm writing to communicate my strong support for **S.B. 1095 - An Act Concerning School Resource Officers**. This bill would publicly outline the duties of school resource officers as well as enable school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to serve as School Resource Officers. Connecticut invests heavily in officers who then police schools, and these SROs can promote a culture of hostility, especially against minority students, and breach their codes of conduct. This legislation ensures they have a clearly defined role, which increases accountability and enables options for students to get treatment when they need it.

Students need a culture of care and respect, not violence and punishment. By ensuring School Resource Officers go through training specifically related to social-emotional learning and restorative practices, students can learn in an environment where they feel comfortable. And when something goes wrong, SROs can be held accountable for their actions.

Connecticut has a serious problem with the school-to-prison pipeline, which is also discriminatory, as evidenced by the disproportionate arrest rates of Black students and students with disabilities. This disparity is perpetuated by the current funding structure, which prioritizes SROs over mental health resources. Studies have shown that school-based health centers are essential for addressing mental health concerns among students, yet the majority of students lack access to such resources due to a lack of funding. Other states have recognized the importance of properly training SROs and have implemented such requirements, providing a potential roadmap for Connecticut to follow in addressing this issue. Ultimately, it is crucial for Connecticut to prioritize the safety and well-being of all students by investing in mental health resources and redefining the role of SROs.

In conclusion, I urge you to help our schools fulfill their responsibility to better the students who attend. This is only possible when SROs have a clear, defined role, one which they cannot abuse. I ask you to favorably vote this bill out of the Education Committee so that students can access the support they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Yurii Stasiuk
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